

Limits

by Andrithir

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Summary: John's life has always been a brutal cycle of warfare. Now trapped in a different universe, the same still applies.

1. Landfall

****A/N: A wack idea I just cooked upâ€¦ not really refined, but I wanted to get it out of my head.****

****Young Justice and Justice League amalgamation.****

****Borrows heavily from my ME/Halo Xover stories.**

>Yes, there is gene therapy involved. Soâ€¦ the Spartans have become _larger**_**, the twos especially.****

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****UNKNOWN LOCATION, 40 YEARS AFTER HUMANITY'S ASCENSION TO TIER 1****

Commander John-117 or as his file say, Commander John Neil Richards, everything had changed so much since Parangosky sold out Halsey. Insurrectionism grew, rebellions expanded, until all that was left of the UNSC, were the Inner Colonies.

John had been tasked with assassinating the leader of the United Rebel Front, the group responsible for the destruction of Wessex on New Hampshire, the death of eight ONISAD Operatives, and the death of Linda and Kelly. Infiltrating the URF Base was the easy, but John never expected to encounter him again. The traitor as the Spartan would call him.

A few metres away, Soren laid cover in mud. He seemed to have gotten his hands on a crude powered exoskeleton, possibly made from reverse engineered Promethean Armour, combined with the HRUNTING Mark

III.

Moving both his arms, John pulled himself up, and let the rain cascade down his greenish grey GEN5 Armour. He ignited the plasma/hard-light wrist blades on his arms, and slowly walked towards Soren. The mud, squelched beneath his feet. John wasn't too sure where they were, after he and Soren fought, both of them had been hurled into a Slipspace rupture.

The Chief prioritised, kill Soren first, and then find a way to get back home. Without warning, Soren moved. He hurled launched himself at John. But the perfect Spartan-II sidestepped the defected hit nothing but air.

"You're strong," John taunted, "but I'm faster."

Years of war, years of infighting, the Spartan-II was at his limits. John lost so much because of Soren's misguided idiocy. He had lost so much to Parangosly's fucked up morals. Kill Soren first, then Serin, and finally, Parangosky.

But right now, Soren's death was all that mattered, all that John bothered to care about. Years of training, years of mental conditioning, years of indoctrination, just, faded away. He wanted to kill Soren so badly, because not only was it his mission, it would serve as closure that the few remaining Twos will have one less threat to worry about.

"Still eating from the same hand, John?" Soren sneered.

The Spartan didn't bother answering. He locked gaze with Soren, looking for the greatest weakness in the heavily battered and scorched HRUNTING armour. With his weapon cells depleted, John was forced to rely on his melee weapon, a hard-light longsword, coated in super dense cobalt plasma.

Lances of electricity spiked up and down Soren's armour as he took a fighting stance. He shifted his shoulders, and launched himself into the air again. His fighting style was brutal, heavy punches and kneeing, little of it resembled Spartan training.

John, being the faster one, swatted the attacks aside, before diving in with his blade. The weapon glanced off Soren's shields, causing them to flare gold. Eventually, the shields winked out, and unlike the GEN5, the HRUNTING did not possess dual layer shielding. The plasma burned through the metal armour, causing the hydrostatic gel to boil and ooze out of the opening. Soren grunted in pain as molten metal fused into his skin. But at least he had just backed up far enough for John's sword to cleave a small part of his flesh.

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****WASHINGTON DC, EARTH, SOL SYSTEM****

Why can't there be just an easy day? M'gann M'orzz sighed. The Martian was beginning to notice a pattern, every time the Senior Justice League members were off world; something had to go wrong on Earth. Sure the Young Justice Team could handle things, they were adults now, but still, whenever the senior members left, something

had to happen.

In her Miss Martian persona, M'gann stood at the edge of the contingency perimeter at the park. The torrential rain that poured down over the soldiers gave them a menacing look. Ever since Earth began to reach for the stars, military forces began upgrading, US soldiers were no exception. They wore digital grey livery, full body armour and enhanced detection systems. All of them had trained their weapons at the centre of the park.

Deciding to take a closer look, M'gann phased into intangibility and floated into the sight of incident. Stealth drones flew overhead, recording the savage fight that was taking place. She phased through the trees with water cascading down their leaves, and finally, came across a blackened opening within the formation of trees.

She couldn't help but gasp by what she saw. They were humanoid in shape, but they were far too big to be human. The smaller one was over eight feet tall. It wore or military greenish grey armour that was without a doubt, awe inspiring and fearsome. Whenever the entity moved, the armour plates would overlap one another; it revealed little of the black body suit, which was arranged into a muscle suit structure.

The larger one, close to nine feet in height, was wearing cruder, bulkier armour; nonetheless, it was just as menacing. As the M'gann closed in on the unsuspecting armoured entities, she could sense that they were male, but even more shockingly, was that the smaller one, had the number '117' engraved onto his chest plate.

They can't be human! They're too big!

Wisps of ionised air were dampened as the rain pulled them away. The electric clash of the sword against the sparking forearms nearly drowned out the rain's chorus. Their armour looked battered and scorched, and they were moving too fast to be human.

Eventually, the smaller one scored a hit. M'gann expected to see the larger one be cut in half, but instead, a golden spark ignited a few centimetres higher.

Energy shields! Personal energy shields! The Martian's mind screamed. She quickly became tangible again to contact the rest of the Young Justice team. Only Wonder Girl was available, but that would have to do.

To M'gann, it felt like hours until Wonder Girl arrived, and when she did, the Martian had retreated to a safe position.

"Woah, they're big," Cassie said, her blonde hair soaked by the rain. "But they shouldn't be a problem."

"Back me up," M'gann said, "in case something goes wrong."

She wanted to know the Origins of these people, and got the feeling that a shady government organisation would interfere.

"You know the government is going to throw a fit if you take these two away, right?" Cassie warned.

Both of them knew that these entities had very human yet alien qualities.

"Then tough," M'gann replied, "aliens are our jurisdiction."

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John quickly slashed Soren's legs, the defector stumbled and fell. As the Spartan-II prepared to give the killing strike, he felt a sharp sensation in the back of his mind, before being embraced by darkness.

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****WATCHTOWER, IN ORBIT OF EARTH****

It seemed that whenever the Senior Members were gone, something wrong always happened. It was like some sort of sick and twisted omen, something that Diana picked up on. So whenever she returned to the Watchtower after the senior members had left, she knew there was a pile of paper work that Mr Terrific was handling, and a lot of exhausted leaguers.

The dull bluish grey halls and the vast view over the Earth did little to soothe her nerves. She stopped by the monitor room, only to realise that Bruce wasn't there.

"He's in the interrogation room if you're wondering," Mr Terrific said.

"Uh, thanks," Diana said. _That man is too smart for his own good_.

Using the elevators and another stroll through the near empty hallways, Wonder Woman finally reached the main holding area. Inside the observation room, stood the Dark Knight in his latest array of high-tech equipment, and his mentee, Nightwing.

Diana found it funny that the absence of light made Bruce look demonic and menacing, while it gave Dick Grayson an aura of hope, youth and kindness. A stark contrast considering that the two were trained in the same arts.

"What's going on?" Diana asked, her cape fluttering behind her. She decided to wear one to signify her seniority and that the mantle of daily protection had been passed onto Wonder Girl.

Batman turned to face, but she noticed his expression softened. "A few hours ago, there was an incident and Washington DC. Two unknowns appeared in what is described as a Slipstream Space Rupture, and started to fight each other."

Diana walked up to the viewport, and gazed at the two inert, fearsome armoured entities inside, illuminated by bright ceiling lights. They were held securely in place by restraints designed by Batman.

"Anyone hurt?" Diana asked casually.

This time it was Dick who answered, but Bruce didn't seem annoyed by it in the slightest. "Aside from them, no one. Unless if you count pissed off officials and 'reporters'," he used the quotation gesture when he referred to the media, usually, it was aimed at Godfrey. "No one was hurt."

"We've been getting some angry calls from government officials I haven't even met," Bruce explained, "they're not too happy. But thankfully we have people on our side. We're not in breach of anything."

"I hope not." Diana spotted the door in the containment cell open, it was Miss Martian, J'onn's niece. Even he considered her to be extremely powerful, and that was saying something. "What is she doing?"

"She brought them here," Dick said, "she and Wonder Girl."

A small smile curled up on Diana's lips, it was nice to know that her protégé was becoming more independent. It would mean her workload would lessen.

"And she's going to probe their minds," Bruce said calmly.

"What?" Diana yelled in shock.

"She's just as powerful as J'onn," the Dark Knight elaborated, "she'll be fine."

Diana relaxed a bit, she trusted her old friend's judgement. "So what do we know about the two in there?"

"Not much," Dick said, shaking his head. He moved away from the console and eased himself into an armchair. Bruce remained standing. "Green has a number tag, one-one-seven. Nothing much about grey."

Wonder Woman took a closer inspection. Her eyes widened when she comprehended how tall they were. M'gann had enlarged her size, making the entities look human size.

"I was surprised too," Bruce said, adding a side comment to what Diana was thinking. Being the Greatest Detective, he could easily read anyone's body language, which also meant he was unbeatable in poker. Good thing he didn't play though.

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Unconscious minds were easy to tap into. They offered little resistance to a person who had M'gann's magnitude of power. She decided to enter the one they called 117.

Pulling up a chair next to the unconscious being, she plopped herself onto it. Her brown eyes flared into a powerful green glow as she searched for his mind. Upon finding it, she enteredâ€| and was horrified by what she saw.

An unconscious mind proved no resistance, all of its memories and knowledge was there for the taking. M'gann felt overwhelmed by the centuries of memories that assaulted her. They sped too fast for her

to assimilate them correctly, but soon, she stabled herself. Her _world_ stopped spinning, and the mind of 117 reorganised itself. Blue lattices of patterns pulsed across the mental realm, and finally, the Martain could see his first memory.

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****A/N: Le wacky ideaâ€¦ that is all.****

****Please review.****

2. Memories

****A/N: Woahâ€¦ the typos in the last chapterâ€¦ thought I rooted all those buggers out. Never mind, I shall tend to them later.****

****I exercise artistic license as there may be things that do not fully coincide with lore.****

****XXxxxXX****

****WATCHTOWER, IN ORBIT OF EARTH****

Trying to remove the weapons was far more difficult than Bruce had thought. They had been literally _fused_ into the back plate of the armour. The Dark Knight pondered whether he should get Diana to tear them off, but realised it was not the best course of action. The armoured entitles would most likely wake up.

He turned his gaze back to the containment room, where the two beings lay. He could read the facial expressions off M'gann. It was the face of someone being overwhelmed with powerful emotions.

â€¦

"_John!" It was his mother. He was playing in the sand, watching a flight of Pelican Dropships fly by. The sun was setting, and it was time to go back._

M'gann smiled at the memory. His mother was human, and it confirmed her earlier impressions. She was beautiful, with her long ebony hair and flowing dress. The Martain felt _his_ emotions of happiness and peace.

Each memory was more than just a memory. M'gann would feel the person's emotions, and learn their knowledge, in effect; every memory was in context for her. A small glimmer of someone's memory could give her vast amounts of information, all because of context.

Delving deeper into his mind, M'orzz could see the pulsing blue streaks spread across the realm. It gave her the impression of a biological and cybernetic brain, merged into one entity. A mind like that, was always more organised than a purely biological brain. Every shard of memory, every shred of knowledge, was perfectly archived and intricate in detail.

"_You're in trouble!" a boy teased. This one was shorter than him by at least a head. He turned to face a woman. She was striking and

elegant in appearance. Behind her, stood a man who appeared to be in the military, despite his grey civilian suit._

"_What's your name?" she asked._

"_John," the boy replied curtly, he held out his hand for a handshake._

M'gann could see that he was polite. But his memories, the technology, they all suggested that he was from a far more technological advanced society. The transports in his earlier memories were already a clear indication. John's mind referred to them as Pelican Dropships. But his mind did not refer to any metas. She wondered if he was from an alternate reality. May be it was a bit hasty to conclude so, but no references to metas, and a higher technological tier, would suggest an inter-dimensional traveller. Either that or that metas had been wiped out in the future, doubtful but a possibility.

"_What is it?" John asked, looking at the small disc like object, glimmering in the sun._ The Martian instantly recognised it as an American quarter. The fact that John was not instantly familiar with it, served to confirm M'gann's hypothesis.

More memories flew by, but the next one made her blood run cold and her green skin prickle. _John felt tired, but something was wrong, he wasn't in his bed, he was in a cot._

"_Get up trainee!" An instructor bellowed._

John didn't move he as too tired to. He yelped and his body tensed as he felt a stun baton jam into his sides.

Conscripts, the children had been conscripted. M'gann felt her heart rate increase rapidly. Never before had she witnessed something like this. These children were going to be turned into soldiers. She felt sick, but she couldn't leave his mind, not yet. There was so much.

She gazed across the memories as he was assigned into a team of three. His memories said that his teammates were Kelly and Sam. Kelly was a beautiful girl with hazel eyes and shoulder brown hair; she towered over the two boys by at least a head. Sam was of a slightly heavier build than John, and had black hair.

"_If you're team doesn't win, neither will you," Chief Mendez said._

John frowned, his team came last, and that meant that they weren't going to be getting any dinner.

M'gann watched as John endured one of the most brutal training regimes she had ever seen, even by adult standards. These kids were trained with fear, pushed beyond their limits. But there was something that set them apart from their average brethren. These children were _perfect_; they were smart, fast and strong. Those attributes were only further enhanced with the best education and nourishment.

"_Friends?" Sam asked._

"_Friends," John and Kelly agreed._

John looked at the obstacles course built into the woods. The sun was beating down heavily on the green leaves, and the winds rocked the ropes back and forth.

"_Same rules as last time, first team to the bell wins," Mendez barked._

Planning his team's moves, and having a desire to win, John formulated a plan. "We need someone to get to the basket and hold it for us."

"_I'm fast," Kelly said, accepting the task._

"_Okay, you're up. Get to that basket," John said, assuming the role of team leader._

Mendez signalled the go, and Kelly shot off. In the span of just a few seconds, she was already outpacing the rest of the group. Her feet barely touched the ground as she ran across the grass. Upon reaching the basket, she was set upon by another team's vanguard.

"_Wait your turn!" Sam hissed, shoving the boy aside before getting into the basket with John and Kelly. The trio used their strength to pull the ropes and lift themselves into the sky._

Shock, horror, disgust, these were the emotions that were coursing throughout the Martian. These exercises were dangerous, there were no safety precautions, but thankfully, no one had gotten themselves hurt. As the memories flowed by, it became all the more clearer to what these children were destined to beâ€¦ the perfect soldiers.

She watched as John guided the group of children through the valleys of the planet Reach, and executed military drills flawlessly. He was a born leader, and a brilliant tactician, he cared for his people and left no one behind.

John let a small grin sweep over his lips as the trap went off. The battery acid has weakened the wooden ply boards of Tango Company's makeshift base, allowing the flashbang grenades to disorientate and rain the soldiers with splinters. He quickly waved his team forward as they moved into capture the flag.

Watching Kelly take out a few guards with Narq darts, John sprinted up to the building across the courtyard, and slammed the Garrison CO against the wall, knocking him out cold. Another guard, a few dozen metres away waved his rifle at John and prepared to fire. But before he could pull the trigger, he dropped his rifle and grabbed the back of his head. Falling face first into the gravel, he thrashed about. John sent a silent thanks to Linda and her superb marksman ship.

Running back to the centre of the courtyard, John quickly grabbed the flag and stuffed it into his shirt. He had won againâ€¦ well not yet.

"_I think they were using live rounds that time," Sam chuckled, "I

think they're mad."_

Kelly smirked as she picked up an empty shell and twirled it around her fingers. "Yep."

The kids were undoubtedly perfect, by their early teens; they had bodies of 18 year old Olympic athletes. It was something M'gann respected greatly, but also appalled.

Their education was accelerated and meticulous, by age eight; they knew how to do calculus. By age ten, they knew how to do mathematical induction, and had learnt the entire history of the UNSC/UEG. It gave M'gann a clearer picture, and she finally understood.

During man's expansion, old feuds broke out. Extremists of both ends of the political spectrum were fighting each other and the centralist-democratic UEG/UNSC. It saddened M'gann greatly to see such horrific violence amongst mankind.

Men and women slugged it out in battles of attrition all over Sol System. But it was the UNSC who prevailed; they used blitzkrieg tactics to overwhelm the opposition. Soldiers dropped in atmospheric re-entry pods over Mars and Earth, and rushed into the heat of battle with their weapons blazing. All these footage and lessons had been etched into John's eidetic mind.

Humanity expanded further into the stars with the help of Slipstream Space Drives. But even though the UNSC had won, man's inner turmoil was only abated for a time. Expanding across systems, new foes arose. Terrorist attacks spread across dense civilian populations, destabilising dozens of regions.

M'gann could finally grasp the purpose of conscripting children. It all became clear to her. Watching John's memories, she knew that it was the UNSC's last resort against the Insurrectionism. They were to be turned into Supersoldiers and pacify the outer colonies.

Hazy, everything was hazy. Doctors and technicians moved back and forth through the darkened hall. John could hear the screams of Spartan brothers and sisters. Bones cracked, skins tore, his hearing became more sensitive, but his ears hurt. He forced his eyes opened, but felt the strain. It was like a bittersweet sensation throughout his body.

He was in pain, but couldn't cry out. His body was on fire, but at the same time, under the flow of cold waterâ€¦ bittersweet pain. John felt as more needles pierce his skin. He heard the whine of a drill as it dug into his bones.

Indescribable sensations of pain and awe swept across him, John could feel himself fading out again. He couldn't fight the darkness this time, and decided to embrace it.

They weren't mindless, that much was clear. They were taught to think, but at the same time, they were mentally conditioned with the ethos of military life. It wasn't difficult, children are always more susceptible to indoctrination.

M'gann saw memories in context, thus she could understand what John was going through. He was being augmented with everything the UNSC

had. She felt his pain, his sadness as he head his comrades in pain, but she could feel his undying loyalty. She could guess that augmentations are most effective on a growing body. John's enhancements would grow with him, making him stronger as time passed. But there were those, who would never be able to join him.

"_Sorenâ€|. I don't know what will happen to him. Desk job I guess," Kelly shrugged._

"_He can always come along with us if he wants," John said._

"_He might slow us down," Sam suggested, taking a drink of water._

Soren and John had a mutual understanding, and were friendly towards one another. The former was excellent in the arts of evasion; it made him one of the best for long-range reconnaissance and monitor. The later was a natural leader and brilliant tactician, able to outsmart many adversaries he came across.

Moving further on into his memories she saw their effectiveness in combat, how easily he took down ODST Soldiers. How easy it was for them to pacify an Insurrectionist Asteroid. They tore through humans as if they weren't there. But the following memories that came, M'gann began to weep. Humanity was at war with not only themselves, but a conglomerate of alien species known as the Covenant.

John's memories served to paint her a vast and intricate picture. It was a war filled with politics and religious beliefs; it was a war that was filled with so much destruction.

The war officially ended on March 23rd 2552, and in the sea of remembrance, M'gann felt John's weariness. She felt his desire for the war to end. She felt his senses that the war was going to end soon, one way or another. But most of all, she felt his loss.

However, there was no rest for the weary, and on John fought within Requiem. The memories explained humanity's rich past and power. They showed her what most movies neglected to showâ€| the brutality, ruthlessness and speed of human expansion. Though what stood out most was the despair that filled him at the loss of Cortana.

"_I'm not going back," the AI said softly, "most of me is down there, I only held enough back for you to get off the ship."_

Memories of the Flood and the Forerunner surged passed her, everything that John had seen, M'gann saw in a short time frame. But the information stopped flowing. The Martian felt her grip on the Spartan's mind slacken. Lattices of cobalt blue began to intensify, forming a wall, and expanding outwards.

The Spartan's mind was reacting; it was fighting against an unknown presence.

"M'gann get out of there!" Dick urged over the COM, "they're waking up!"

Upon witnessing the last memory, M'gann screamed out a warning.

"They're armed!"

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John breathed as his eyes shot open. Bright lights assaulted his eyes as he regained his bearings. Information from his armour flooded through his neural implants whilst simultaneously splayed across his HUD.

Location, unkown. Weapons, still in repairs. Armour fully functional.

He tried to move, but realised that he was secured onto a bench of some kind. He felt a presence leaving his mind, it was like that feeling when he would pull Cortana out of his armour. John turned and saw a very human but alien figure looking at him with shock and tears streaming down her face.

She had her brown hair cut into a page-boy style. Her eyes were brown and stood out against her green skin that was dotted with freckles. From a distance, she would seem innocent, but John knew that her innocence had evaporated a long time ago. But then, for some unexplained reason, she faded from sight. He concluded that it was the after-effects of being knocked unconscious.

The suit's functionality flooded his senses; magnetic coils along his gauntlets glowed and collected superdense plasma at its ends, melting through the restraints. Quickly, John tore himself free, and lunged straight at Soren.

The Fallen Spartan had awoken and was in the process of freeing himself, when the Chief slammed into his body.

John slammed Soren into the bench repeatedly, draining the former Spartan's shields. But without forewarning, the entire chamber was engulfed in a powerful light, and soon, John found himself in a freefall to the lower levels. Apparently the Cyclops Armour packed some safeguards as well.

The two superhumans landed onto the grey metal decks with a resounding thud. John quickly noted the people dressed in costumes and the various unidentified jets docked in their bays, before launching a couple of punches at Soren.

The Spartans engaged one another in a brutal melee. Soren was stronger, which meant his style was less rapid but more powerful. John being the faster one was quick on his feet, but consistently shifted his fighting stance like Li taught him.

When Soren would attack, John would dodge and sweep aside the attacks. But when going on the offensive, he would open with long sweeping acrobatic strikes before coming close for quick rapid attacks.

The Innie sympathiser swung a right hook which barely brushed past John's faceplate. The Commander flipped back and delivered a kick to the Soren's chin. Shield's flared upon impact, but since the Chief's move carried more momentum, Soren was knocked back a few paces.

John raised both arms, allowed the plasma to collect, and fire.

Ghostly blue bolts streaked towards Soren and splashed across his shields, draining them considerably and leaving crackling air in their wake.

Knowing that his armour lacked any offensive capabilities, Soren engaged his thruster pack, and launched himself towards a console nearby. It was then; John noticed that he and his former friend were standing ontop of a hatch that would allow jets to drop out quickly.

He swore as he saw Soren slam the panel, in an instant, the air around them was sucked into space, taking the two superhumans along.

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****A/N: I'm afraid I'll have to leave it there for now.****

****Please review guys, thanks.****

3. Killing Our Own

****A/N: We're back!****

****XXxxXX****

****EARTH****

He was falling, they were both falling. The air around them heated and burned, slowly draining their shields. John stretched his fingers and latched onto Soren's armour, the two engaged in a brutal struggle, hurling desperate but powerful punches.

All it took, was for one of them to have an armour breach, and they would die. John was intent on killing the former Spartan. His mind, his soul, his heart roared for Soren's death. The Spartan would be quick, swift and brutal.

He swept aside one of Soren's punches and aimed one at the shoulder plates. The HRUNTING Armour cracked under the sheer force from the enhanced GEN5.

Grabbing onto the chest plate, John pulled himself directly above Soren, and ignited his thrusters. He was going to use the fallen one as a heat shield.

"Die you bastard!" John bellowed. He had never been one to cuss, never been one to lose his calmness, but Soren, he took everything from John.

The former Spartan struggled and attempted to fight back, but it was no use, he could feel his resolve and strength burning away under the intense heat. He could feel John's enraged glare boiling through their visors.

Quickly, the stars began to fade, and the sky turned blue. Clouds were punctured by the orange streak that tore through the air.

Coolant and hydrostatic gel began to ooze out of the emergency ports from Soren's armour, and burn up in the atmosphere. The two were coming in so fast that a normal human couldn't touch down safely.

Soren once again feebly attempted to throw John off of him, but his back began to blister under the intense heat. He struggled staving off the darkness.

The Commander shifted his grip and wrapped his fingers around the exposed section between the helmet and neck guard. Soren was in no shape or form to resist he could barely stay awake as is. And in one simple command, John's gauntlets were engulfed in plasma.

The bodysuit and the plates that rubbed along the GEN5 quickly boiled and bubbled away. John increased the pressure, and felt his fingers closing in, constricting Soren's throat. And in less than a heartbeat, the fallen Spartan stopped moving. Stopped struggling, just went limp as his head fell away.

He watched Soren's lifeless body, trailed by smoke, spiral into the vast ocean that stretched below. Smiling in grim satisfaction, John felt his heartbeat slow down, and his vision widen. Adrenaline was no longer pumping through his veins, and his primal nature was no longer running rampant.

Proximity alert!

The HUD warned. Quickly John repositioned his thrusters and shaped his shields into wings. He grunted as he felt the sudden g-forces push on him. It was like running into a brick wall and having all the air knocked out of his lungs. But it wasn't enough.

He was coming in too fast. The pressure was too much, and once again, darkness claimed him.

â€|

Systems critical â€" automated repairs underway, additional resources required

John winced as the sun shone through his visor. He gingerly held up his arm to shield his eyes, only to realise his muscles crying out in defiance. Something was tied around his limbs. He pivoted his head to see thick ropes wrapped around his arms and legs. Looking up, he could see that he was surrounded by women clad in Greek armour.

From what he could tell, they had a perfect physique which spoke of power, strength, grace and elegance. Feeling the low grating sensation along his back, John knew that they were dragging him somewhere.

"Do you think it is man or machine?" one of them asked.

"Both," came a reply.

John noted the level of animosity and contempt in their voice. He quickly recalled one of Deja's lessons regarding Greek mythology. He guessed that these people were Amazons. Souls of women unjustly killed by men, given life once more, and a stronger body.

He flexed his fingers and curled them into a fist. He was unsure of how to proceed with the situation. But his training already had an answerâ€¦| _fight_.

Without forewarning, the GEN5's gauntlets were coated in plasma again, burning through the ropes. Ignoring the pain, John quickly pushed himself off the grounds, and removed the ropes binding his legs.

The warriors reacted. They spun around and stabbed their spears at John with remarkable precision and speed. The pointed heads impacted against John's shields, causing it to flare gold. His eyes widened as the alarms began to blare inside his helmet.

They're strong, move fast and aim high.

Dodging another spear attack, John wrapped his left arm around the shaft, and used his right to slam the midsection. His sharp eyes watched as the timber bend further than what could be considered normal. Upon reaching breaking point, the shaft cracked and splintered, breaking off in a jagged mess.

Another warrior came in from John's left with a sword held high. The Spartan barely moved in time as the blade glanced off his shields. John eyed the counter draining just that bit further. He pulled back his fist, and let it shot out faster than the time it took a normal human to think. The Amazon's bronze shield dented as she stumbled. The resounding crash indicated that these shields were stronger than what John perceived them to be.

His gut instinct screamed that something was off. These women had a perfect physique, though he towered over them by at least two feet. Their strength was something very disproportionate to their size. And their weapons had a greater durability than what would be expected.

The Amazon warriors moved back and formed a semi-circle, taking advantage of slightly higher ground.

John took the brief split second to survey his surroundings. He was standing on a white sand beach, and in front of him were elevated plateaus with Greek style settlements. Already, there were warriors rushing out from the posts and down to the beach. He noted that there were no men.

_Visual Augmentation Systems online
>Sensors online

The HUD exploded into a myriad of life as the GEN5's computer began to scan and catalogue everything. Unknowns were highlighted in white, and hostile actions were highlighted in red. Currently, the massive formation that assembled in front of him were coloured in crimson.

He wasn't too sure what to make of this, but his time with ONISAD and his Spartan-II training taught him one thing about rules of engagement. Everyone who can hold a gun is a threat, regardless of age or gender, treat them no differently.

"Surrender!" an Amazon ordered. She had unusually long red hair, and was revered by those standing around her.

Weapons functional, was scrolled out on the HUD. John eyed the readout; the Relentless Assault Rifle had been repaired by the armour. He unlocked the magnetic clamps on his back, allowing him to unsling the weapon and cradle it in his hands.

The Amazons interpreted this as a hostile act, and entrenched their stance.

Slowly, John raised the sleek, streamlined, chrome-black weapon to bear. It was by all definitions fearsome and powerful, capable of shredding hordes of Flood apart in mere seconds. Its accuracy and range allowed it to become a specialist weapon for the UNSC, and a high-valued commodity on the black markets.

If the Spartan couldn't fight his way out with this weapon, then there would be no other options available. The Relentless was designed to overwhelm with precision and shock and awe.

Tension hung in their air, so thick that it could be touched. John's finger slowly hovered over the trigger.

"John wait!" a voice cried. It sounded familiar, a bit too familiar that it was unnerving.

He pivoted his head, and saw ranks of Amazon warriors step aside. A woman, with long beautiful brown hair walked towards him. Everything about her spoke of joy, serenity and elegance. Her robes fluttered with the soft sea breeze, hugging her superb physique and revealing her shapely bare legs. She was noticeably taller than those who surrounded her, but she was still shorter than the Spartan.

"John, it's okay," she said softly.

"Kelly?" his mouth was dry, his heartbeat picked up.

She smiled warmly. "It's me. You're safe now."

A torrent of questions surged through John's mind. How was she alive? How was she here?

Forgoing all rational thought, forgoing all the years of discipline and professionalism, the Spartan dropped his weapon, letting it dig into the sand. The GEN5 Armour plates parted, and the outer layer body suit split open, allowing him to literally walk out of the armour.

His nano-tech bodysuit reshaped itself into a grey shirt, digital camo cargo pants and boots. Slowly he walked towards Kelly, his eyes unblinking.

"You're safe now," she whispered softly.

Kelly raised her hand and formed a Spartan smile across his lips, before slowly moving to cup his cheek. Her thumb brushed gently over the thin scar that curved over his right eye. Something was offâ€¦ it just didn't feel right.

"Everything is going to be okay."

She pulled him into an embrace, wrapping one arm around his neck, and the other behind his back. A soft smile formed on John's young but weary face as he held her, but something was out of place. Spartans had never been ones to initiate intimacy, but times change, and people change.

He let out a soft chuckle as he cradled her in his arms, the Amazon army long forgotten.

"John!" a voice cried.

The Spartan blinked. He was still in his armour; he still had his rifle raised. And the Amazon army stood un-movingly.

She's gone, his mind whispered.

He was hallucinating, and he knew it, borderline breakdown.

"John! Commander!"

"Amazons! At ease!" another voice commanded.

The Spartan turned to see the Amazons relax their stance and part ways as three women came running to the scene. Their attire seemed more€| _contemporary_, albeit flashy.

One of them was the one he saw earlier when he woke up. The other two were dressed in a similar fashion. The blonde haired girl looked no older than twenty-two, wearing sneakers, red sweat pants and a black top. The other, a beautiful raven haired woman who appeared to be the mentor, wore attire that was an amalgamation between the contemporary and ancient Greek.

John kept the Relentless trained on them, but they seemed unfazed. Either they were stupid beyond all measure, or they had another card up their sleeve. John assumed it was the latter, but kept his weapon levelled just in case.

"We mean you no harm," the raven haired woman said diplomatically.

"Then what do you want?" John growled.

"We know all about you," she said, "we just want to help."

Then it hit him, that feeling in his head earlier. He had been through similar things before. They were reading his mind! He felt a dark cold sensation fill his stomach, slowly spreading to his chest. They would have access to the most sensitive information about the UNSC, force deployments, tactics, behavioural modification and so much more.

Are they a loose end? He wondered.

"We just want to help," said the green skinned humanoid.

John was suspicious, weary, but what choice did he have? Already, he was aware of the physical capabilities these women had. The rational,

intelligence spook inside of him wanted answers. A society of powerful warriors was something that could not be ignored.

Calmly, the Spartan placed the RAS back onto the magnetic clamp, and as a sign of good faith, he decided to remove his helmet. With a soft hiss from the air locks, seams appeared across the head pieces, splitting apart and folding away.

Everyone standing there got the chance to see his face. A timeless, youthful face with old weary blue eyes, and a tired expression, cybernetic augmentation can do wonders, but it can never mask age old grimness.

He could see some of their eyes widen in shock, they had assumed an old face to go with the deep baritone voice. In a non-hostile manner, John began walking towards the three women.

"Lead the way," he said.

â€|

Diana would have to say that she came a long way in terms of understanding the world of men. Her two closest friends were practically extremities of the spectrum of good men. Bruce's compassion and kind hearted nature was masked by an aura of intimidation, and cold ruthlessness, but at least he cracked a dry joke every now and then. Usually it was in the presence of her and Clark.

Now Kent, he was open, and a very approachable person. Lois was truly lucky to have him. Funnily enough, both men's alternate personas were also polar opposites of one another. One a philanthropist playboy, and the other, a mild-mannered everyday man.

However, the man walking behind her, he was something else entirely. He moved with such grace and precision as if he was a god. His footfalls were silent, especially considering his height. The way he walked however, told a tragic story which M'gann served to confirm on their way down.

The Martian had specifically stated that no one was to fly towards him. Diana wondered how John felt, having his mind probed, having all of his personal memories and secrets glimpsed by another person.

But from what M'gann had said, John did not have a life of his own. He was living, breathing, military hardwareâ€| capable of self-actualisation and high-cognitive functions. Though he didn't look like it, John was originally trained and purposed for covert and clandestine operations, unconventional warfare.

Hell, he just fell from high orbit and shrugged it off as if it hadn't happened. He was trained and moulded to be the best of the bestâ€| and beyond.

He had the walk of a man who had lost too much, seen too much. What held him together was beyond Diana. Though, such thoughts were a luxury. Bruce had been monitoring the descent of the two Spartans and said that John had killed Soren by decapitation with bare hands.

Walking back to the docked Javelin, the Spartan made no sound; he didn't utter a single word. She had met her fair share of "unconventional" travellers; most of them had been curious and talkative. But it was hard to be like that when John had witnessed the burning of so many worlds.

M'gann had been quick on her rundown, but it was enough to paint a horrific and tragic picture. This was real-life, reality. Fairy tales do not exist in a world of absolution.

As they boarded the Javelin, Diana watched a John bent his head down to fit into the hold. He kept his cold blue gaze over the three and remained silent. It was very unnerving and riveting.

Sitting down at the pilot's seat, she was just happy to be out of his field of sight. Her fingers danced across the console as she warmed up the engines, and gunned it for the Watchtower.

This was going to be a very long night.

****XXxxXX****

****A/N: Well, whaddy think?****

****Please leave a review and let me know.****

4. Promises

****A/N: And we're back.****

****XXxxXX****

****EARTH, WATCHTOWER****

Black Canary had finally finished giving the Spartan a crash course history lesson of humanity in this reality. If he was shocked by any aspect, then he didn't show it. He did of course however, raise his eyebrows a few time when the League mentioned Superman or the Green Lanterns' abilities.

M'gann kept her gaze on John through the one way mirror. His eyes glowed cobalt, more so than on Themyscira. She felt like he was watching her, glaring at her with a cold rage. His face was set in stone with a dark grimness. He was loyal that much was certain, borderline fanatical to the UNSC. But having seen his memories, she knew better. He was devoted to preserving innocence, devoted to preserving an ideal in a fading world of men.

May be the Amazons were right about a few things about men. The universe John came from, man had an unquenchable thirst for expansion and warfare. Despite their democratic society, there was always someone left to fight. Humans in their "purest" forms were Hunters. Without any "powerful" individuals such as metas to reign in mankind, humanity's limitations became their greatest drive and motivation.

They strived to push boundaries, strived to push beyond what was conceivable. And the product of such endeavours, was sitting in the room in front of her. John was more than just the perfect soldier, he

was beyond that. The UNSC made him the epitome of humanity's ability to hunt and kill. But he wasn't the only one. There was always more than one, always.

"I know you're the one who searched my memories," John growled. His voice was deep, borderline synthesised.

If it weren't for his voice and his cold blue eyes, M'gann and probably many other female Leaguers would consider him to be attractive. He had a moderate layer of stubble on his rugged jawline, and neatly cut brown hair. His facial structure was somewhere between oblong and rectangle, emitting an aura of a honed weapon.

M'orzz decided to use her intangible ability to phase through the glass plane and step into the opposing room. It was nicely decorated, usually reserved for examining extra-terrestrials or psychological evaluation of Leaguers.

John pivoted his face showed no emotion, no surprise at her "unique" ability. He kept his steel gaze on her, running his cold blue eyes up and down her frame. He was sizing her up, assessing her abilities. M'gann felt a cold hand was running up her spine as she made eye contact with him. She felt a stronger presence surrounding his mind; she couldn't even hear a whisper of what he was thinking.

"Yes, I did probe your memories," the Maritain uttered, thankful that her voice did not show her fear.

"Then you know the gravity of the knowledge."

M'gann quickly glossed through his memories again. A large portion of them were personal, centred on him and a beautiful women named Kelly. The rest held information and secrets to the UNSC combat doctrine and training methods, specifically the Arcani Program, ONISADs mandatory program for all SOG Operatives. Spartan-II Program involved the reshaping of exemplary kids, whereas Arcani focused on breaking down adult volunteers. Then there were other memories John and his fellow Operatives had been forced into a nasty situation which involved child soldiers. That kind of information would be detrimental against ONI in their fight against the Insurrectionism.

"Yes," Miss Martian said.

John slowly stood from his chair, raising himself to full height and glared at her with a seething anger. He looked absolutely fearsome inside the grey-ish green armour.

"You have no right to be in my mind the first place," he growled. His voice was once again, borderline synthesised. It sounded like a ghost in the machine, kind of voice. Disembodied, but having enough personality.

"Look, I'm sorry," M'gann stuttered, "it's just you and Soren, were too many unknowns, I had to do something. You could've been a threat. If I hadn't seen your memories, who knows what could've happened back on Themyscira."

John breathed, she saw his shoulders relax a little, he bought the explanation.

The side doors parted open and in walked the senior members of the Justice League who were still at Earth. Superman, Green Lantern John Stewart and Hawkman were still off planet tending to a crisis near Oa.

Batman being the "most senior" member - mainly because his company was the one funding the League's blank checks - sat at the middle chair. Wonder Woman flanked his left, while Hal Jordan and Black Canary sat at his right. Nightwing and Flash sat at the table ends respectively.

All eyes turned to the Spartan as he sat down again.

"I'm sure the few hours you've been here are productive?" Batman asked, though it sounded more like a statement.

The Chief nodded. "Humanity in this universe is still lacking."

No reaction other than a small gesture of agreement.

"Pleasantries aside," the Dark Knight continued, "we're cutting to the chase. We've been hounded this morning by Government Departments about 'taking you in'. Given the circumstances, we would like to know if you would work at the Justice League as a contractor."

M'gann noted how Batman said "contractor" and not a full time member. She had told the senior members what they needed to know, and having a Supersoldier/assassin hybrid in the League was not exactly the greatest idea for public relations.

She knew that John would've picked up on that as well, he was smart and intelligent, his eidetic memory was a testament to that. M'gann could see the Spartan weighing out his options. His best bet was to stay with the League for now.

Of course, the Martian knew that there were ground rules that needed to be put down. Number one rule which she was sure that it would be at the top of John's list was secrets and a tight lid kept on the technology.

If any one of the rogue galleries managed to even get a glimpse at the science behind the Spartan on his MJOLNIR Armour, then the consequences would be catastrophic. It made M'gann's blood run cold simply at the thought of rogue "Spartans" running rampant on Earth.

"Is relocation possible?" John asked. This time, his voice sounded strained and weary. It was clear that he was tired from all the fighting and just wanted some time off.

Everyone in the room could see the exhaustion in his tired, weathered blue eyes.

"Not necessarily," Batman said, "we don't have any suitable location."

"I don't care if it is away from the cities," the Spartan interrupted.

"You just want somewhere to rest quietly," M'gann supplied.

John turned his steely gaze to her, and softened a little as he gave a nod of agreement.

"But if you need help," the Spartan added, "then just ask."

****XXxxXX****

****EARTH, MEDITERRANEAN, ELYSIUM****

John knew that Batman was aiming for him and the League to both be on good terms with one another. Neither side had any intentions of harming innocents, so why would they want to be on opposing sides?

The Dark Knight used his incredible network of resources and contacts to purchase a small out-of-way tropical island in the Mediterranean Sea. Officially, it was to act as a Forward Operation Base in Europe, a point of resupply and marshalling for Justice Leagues teams about to be deployed in the region.

Unofficially, it would serve as a place of residence for the Spartan until he got his bearings and felt ready to "rejoin" the greater community. The house that had been built upon the Island was sleek, modern, and had a timeless feel to it. It had the perfect mix of timber, metal, glass and masonry for its design.

There was even a personal armoury bay for John in the subterranean levels. John's personal quarters were located near the summit of the mountain on the island, hence his armoury would be "underground" and right next door to him, convenient. Yes, the Batman really wanted to have the Spartan on their side. Not that the Supersoldier was complaining or anything. If the League did ask for his assistance, he'd probably provide it. After all, what else could he do? He came in by a freak chance of luck with slipstream space ruptures.

He knew that there was no clear logical way of getting back home. Worrying about it would be unproductive. But maybe, when he would've settled in and acclimatised, John played with the idea of going to Mombasa.

It was a hunch at best, but if there was a way to get back, then it would have to be close to Voi.

Stepping out onto the balcony with a cold drink in hand, John gazed out at the beach, and the vast sea that stretched out below and beyond. There was something comforting about watching the sun dipping over the horizon.

Slowly, he eased himself onto the recliners tailored for his size, and continued watching the sky fade into a deep ember.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" a familiar voice said.

John picoted his head and gazed at Kelly's form. She wore casual clothes suited for tropical weather; it stood out in contrast to the black military fatigues he wore. He felt the wind roll over his forearms as the brunette's hair fluttered with the air.

"Yes it is," he said softly.

"Would be nice to just, spend the rest of our lives here."

John smiled grimly. He felt that his chance at happiness was long gone, and now, his shattered mind was just taunting him. He wanted what other people took for granted, he wanted to have what he gave so much to protect, he wanted to have a family like Maria did, so badly. But with Kelly gone, he felt that his chance at another life was gone too.

"Remember to take it easy on M'gann okay? She's doing it tough, and whatever you do, don't make the league hate you," Kelly said jovially. But her words fell on deaf ears.

"Why are you here?" John asked.

Kelly laughed, "it's not my time yet."

Slowly she faded from sight again, and John was left gazing at the empty recliner. He took in a deep breath and sighed. He missed her so much. More so that it outweighed his fear of descending into madness, into rampancy.

Soren's dead, and when you get backâ€¦ so will Osman and Parangosky.

****XXxxXX****

****A/N: Short I know, but please review.****

5. Spartan vs Amazon

****A/N: And we're back****

****XXxxXX****

"_How many of us are left?"
>_**-Arca**_

"_Not many, we're going to have to leave soon, and take everything with us."
>_**-LTCOL Doctor Essingdon Dominic
Keyes**_

****XXxxXX****

****EARTH, MEDITERRANEAN, ELYSIUM****

There was always something nice about being able to do something physically rather than mentally. Well, that was John's opinion anyway. As much as he enjoyed the link-and-go interfaces of his world's technology, it still couldn't compare to touch.

He had placed his tacpad onto the table in front of him; its curved rectangular shape and black-chrome design made it look like any other smartphone in this reality. The tacpad is a Field Operative's best friend, it stood in as a substituted for armour computers when

working in densely populated areas.

John had to say, the device had saved his life on numerous occasions. It pinged him whenever an unknown hostile was nearby, or took the fall for him when an interface was rigged. Right now, he had the device interface with the Island Base's network.

The tacpad projected a high resolution, widescreen hardlight panel into the air allowing the Spartan to browse through hundreds of news articles pertaining to the exploits of the superheros and super villains of this universe. It appalled him to see the casualty ratio between Leaguers and villains. In his world, people like Joker or Bane would've been shot on sight, not thrown in jail just so they could escape again.

John leaned back into his chair, letting the cushion embrace his back. As much as he liked being in the armour and its entirety, he would just have to settle for the bodysuit and cargo pants. The many years he had spent working alongside ONISAD had reminded him to operate on the barest minimum. Why? Because like all Special Missions Unit and Recon Groups in the UNSC, they were comparable to a fire and forget weapon. They would be sent deep behind enemy lines with little intel to complete an objective. He would have to treat his current predicament the same way. Lay low and observe until an opportunity of some kind presented itself.

As soon as he would get the green light, John planned to be going to Mombasa; he had a hunch that he would find something relevant there.

Looking back out over the beach, he wondered why people here would accept him so quickly. Maybe it was because of M'gann's words or maybe he wasn't the first. Either way, he didn't really consider that he had proven himself to them, not that it mattered.

His first priority was to find a way back home. He really couldn't care less about this world while he burned. But should the League require his assistance at any point, he wouldn't hesitate to kill to help them. He couldn't just undo years of training just so someone at home could sleep easy because their heroes hadn't turned homicidal. No, if he was sent to stop someone from a rogue gallery, he would use lethal force.

John heard one of the doors open, his ears picked up the quiet footfalls of Black Canary, but there was someone else behind her. Pocketing his tacpad, the Spartan quickly turned and saw a man in peak physical condition, and coated in silver. From the way he moved, John could tell he was military.

"Commander," Canary said coolly, "I'd like you to meet Green Lantern John Stewart former United States Marine, who will be your liaison for today."

John gave a polite salute, something he rarely did these days considering his recent deployments. Fighting Insurrectionists forced people to be more—utilitarian and efficient in the way they behaved.

"Stewart," the Spartan said in his baritone voice. His mannerisms clearly told the Lantern that John knew everything about the

man.

"Commander. I've heard next to nothing about you, sir."

It was clear who the most powerful person in the room was, but it was also clear who commandeered the most authority. The way how John's eyes moved clearly made him the authority figure. His interactions with the League had been minimal, but everyone treated him with awe and respect.

Many would assume that it was his stature that dominated over others, but that wasn't the half of it. John's ability to be the leader in the bowels of hell was because of his experience, initiative and the way how he held himself.

He found himself pondering why the League would help him. M'gann had seen his memories, which had no doubt played a vital role in the events that had unfolded. As much as he hated to say it, he was indebted to her. She saved his life, because if it wasn't for her, things on Themyscira would've gotten messy. John was also aware that the local governments were out for him. But from what other Leaguers had indicated, it would blow over quickly. There were plenty of people out there with similar tech. However he wasn't too sure that the governments would overlook him, not after how he'd arrive.

"We'll, I'm going to leave you gentlemen to it," Black Canary said before departing. Her voice brought the Spartan back out of deep thought. He had always been able to think and act faster.

"Do you have any plans?" Stewart asked.

"Finding a way back," John said in his deep voice.

"Do you have any idea how?"

"Mombasa," the Spartan answered in a tone of finality.

"The Senior members of the League were wonderingâ€¦"

John cut him off. "You're asking a soldier, a black ops soldier, to fight alongside _heroes_."

The way how he had said "heroes" was laced with a patronising tone. John had read what the League had done, well on the flipside, what the League hadn't done. Many of the world's problems wouldn't exist today if the League hadn't been soâ€¦ indecisive.

Of course John was aware of the consequences of those implications, such as big-media blowing things out of proportion thus turning the general populace against the League. Then all the heroes' sacrifices would've been in vain.

"We could always use another hand, sir," Stewart said respectfully.

The Spartan was suddenly reminded of the days when he had been "more obedient". But working with ONISAD and undergoing the Arcani Program had changed him significantly. Sure he was still quiet, reserved, enigmatic to some, and an awesome presence. But that was just his

armour. His armour was what made him and all the other Spartans so symbolic. Rarely would a soldier let alone a civilian would get to _see_ the flesh and blood underneath.

John Richards was the Assassin, the Asset. John-117 was the symbol of hope, faith, and a belief in a tomorrow. The Spartan wondered if that was his last name, shreds of his own memories seemed to verify that Richards was indeed his last name. But he knew it could be his subconscious wanting to be more than just a number, a machine. Ironical that Richards was now the embodiment of the Insurrectionists, Warlords, Secessionists and Rebels' worst nightmares.

The Spartan turned his gaze over the ocean and pondered the offer. He was indebted to Batman for shielding him from the Government, and he knew he needed a way to get back home. He mulled over the offer. What did he have to lose? _A lotâ€¦ and nothing_.

Did the League really want a Supersoldier assassin working with them? These people were very righteous in their own conservative way. Stewart was very stoic and disciplined; he was a soldier of course. Probably why he was John's liaison.

"It's all up to you, sir," the Green Lantern said. "We're undermanned, and we're always under threat."

John closed his eyes and folded his arms. He could see himself become dryer and grimmer by the day. His sense of humour was growing darker and colder as well. He knew he had been fighting for too long. He needed rest, his mind demanded rest.

He wasn't too sure if he was willing to bow down to his subconscious's wishes.

"You should take up the offer," John heard Kelly say. She was standing on the balcony facing him. Her hair and dress was fluttering in the sea breeze. But just as quickly as she appeared, she quickly vanished from his sight.

The Spartan turned his attention back to Stewart, whom had a worried expression on his face. The Green Lantern was no stranger to post-traumatic stress symptoms. He could see the tell-tale signs. John mentally scolded himself for being so careless.

"I just want you to think about it, sir."

"I said I'll help, I never said anything about joining."

"Then that's all we can ask."

And with that final word, Stewart left John alone with his own thoughts, and ailing mind. The Spartan eased himself back on the couch and stared aimlessly out to the sea with tired azure eyes. His mind began to wander. He began to hear the voices of all his dead Spartan brothers and sisters.

"You look like hell Chief," a gruff voice said.

John quickly pivoted his eyes to his left and saw a man he thought he'd never see again. The man was about his size, which was strange, all things considered. But that didn't really

matter.

"Johnson?"

The Sergeant Major gave a hearty chuckle of approval as he rolled his cigar along his teeth.

"That's me."

"I saw you die," John said carefully. "This is not real" he's not real."

"Hell, Chief. Takes a lot more than Tinkerbell to kill me," Johnson laughed.

"Why are you here?"

"It's not my time."

Johnson slowly faded away from sight, just like Kelly did. These "hallucinations" were deeply concerning to the Spartan as he gazed out of the Mediterranean. He was still in deep thought when Batman arrived. The Chief managed to pick up the Dark Knight's presence with his enhanced sense, and turned his eyes to face.

"Impressive," the demonic figure said in his patented growl.

John arched an eyebrow lightly, indicated that he wasn't in anyway intimidated.

The slight sway in the Batman's shoulders as he walked towards the Spartan indicated that he was not intimidated either. After all, why should he be? He had gone up against gods.

"I have something for you," the Dark Knight said, standing within the lounge area. "It will help you blend in."

He retrieved a small box from his utility belt. It was about the size of his palm, and looked expensive in itself.

"I got this off from a few friends. It's a hybrid of science and magic."

"Magic?" John drawled.

"I don't trust it either," Batman shrugged lightly, "but it works, and it's from a friend."

The Spartan remained silent.

"The Government is keeping an eye out for you. You're not the first inter-dimensional traveller to have come here. But some things have caught their attention."

John inclined his head lightly, indicating for the Dark Knight to continue.

"We can't have you cooped up in here all day. I want you to get out, and do something. Preferably something productive."

The Spartan leaned back into his seat, slightly taken back by surprise. There was more meaning in that last statement that Batman let on. John had always assumed the Dark Knight to be someone impersonal, cold and calculative. But usually a person like that doesn't fight crime pro-bono. Whoever was under that mask, he had taken a long time to conceal a soft side of himself, the soft side that embodied humanity's greatest qualities.

"How can you trust me?" John asked.

"I still have my reservations, if that's what you're asking," Batman answered neutrally. "But I trust Miss Martian, and you've done nothing so far to betray that trust."

"You're not the type to go out on limb, though," the Chief said, taking a stab in the dark.

"I'm not giving you full level access to the Watchtower. But Miss Martian has seen your entire mind. She knows exactly who, you, are," the Dark Knight emphasised.

John stood and folded his arms, boring his cold fiery blue eyes into the white lenses. "What has she told you?"

"Nothing that we can use against you and your people."

Despite the supposed hostility in the sentence, it served to put the Chief's nerves at ease. It just went to show how the Spartan and the Dark Knight were on the same page.

"You've done things— things you're not proud of. But they were a necessity, I know. But I'm giving you a chance to leave it all behind, even if it's just for a short amount of time."

John eyed the man in front of him suspiciously. "Why are you even helping me? What's in it for you?"

"One less loose end— and for another person to have a _normal_ life."

Despite the absolute impersonal and cold tone, John could hear underlying warmth and compassion. It _scared_ him for lack of a better term. He had never really come across a situation like this before. Sure the Librarian came close, but he was in a way, her protector and she needed someone to stop the Didact. Batman's stake in John could be something purely sentimental.

The Spartan looked at the box, and slowly reached out for the open palm. He was handed the white box, and he gently opened it. There was a black watch inside, military to be precise.

"This watch has limited shrinking tech and disguising —" _charms,_ for lack of a better word."

The Spartan gave a light scoff as he arched an eyebrow.

"It works," the Dark Knight said. He pointed to a few components as he explained the watch's functionalities. "This dial is to adjust your size. Yes, size adjustment. There are limits on it, you can't grow any bigger than you are now, and you can't shrink to anything

smaller than me."

Shrinking techâ€¦ could be useful in the future, John pondered.

"Next function is COMs, you can use it to contact the League. There's also tracking bugs on it too. I may be hiding you from a shady organisation, but that doesn't mean I fully trust you."

"Understandable," the Spartan said neutrally.

He attached the watch onto his left wrist and set the dial. Suddenly, he felt his view angle shift dramatically. It didn't hurt; in fact he didn't feel anything except for the fact that his clothes were bigger on him. No matter, a quick command via neural lace and tacpad quickly remedied that.

Batman's cowl lenses shifted slightly, showing that he was slightly surprised at the nanosuit's ability to morph so quickly.

Instead of wearing UNSC military fatigues, John was now wearing simple contemporary casual clothing consisting of a collared top with the sleeves folded up just below the elbow, grey cargo pants and durable shoes. He looked just like any other civilian now.

"Here's something else to get yourself started," Batman said, handing him a file of documents. "Miss Martian gave me enough info to create a 'fake' identity for you."

"You sound just like one of my contacts," John added dryly. He opened the folder and looked at the first page.

John Neil Richardsâ€¦

â€¦

The day after he had talked with Captain Stewart, the Leaguers acted differently towards the Spartan. Not for better or worse, just different. They treated him with a level of respect, and stayed clear out of his way. Only liaisons and senior members talked to him. The rest kept their distances.

John didn't really care though; he couldn't really find solace in anything these days. And because of that, he hated down timeâ€¦ which was why he accepted a sparing challenge from Wonder Woman.

Thankfully the match was going to be conducted at Elysium, so there weren't going to be that _many_ spectators. Just Batman, Stewart, Supergirl, Nightwing, Miss Martian and Black Canary. John reassessed the term of "not that many". In his opinion, there was a crowd watching this. But it really didn't matter. He needed an outlet, preferably something that wouldn't break against a Spartan. He needed an outlet badly because he knew that he was losing his grip.

Wonder Woman or Princess Diana, was an Amazon Champion, blessed by the Gods of Olympus â€" something that the Spartan was having difficulty with. He would've called bluff had he not seen various forms of magic. However, he was still uncomfortable of with magic and

gods existing on the same plane.

"Ready, Spartan?"

Diana didn't address him by his first name, something he was grateful for. He wasn't comfortable with people he had barely known, calling him "John". He preferred being called Richards as it was more representative of his nature " not that he liked it though.

The Amazon Champion was not wearing her uniform, in fact she wore a grey sports top and form fitting shorts which left her midriff bare and accentuated her physique. The lack of footwear was interesting to note. John on the other hand, wore combat fatigues with the sleeves rolled up.

"Ready," he said with a nod.

The two assumed their fighting stance. Diana's was simple, regular stance, and both fists held at head level. John was silent different, having been taught by Li, his combat style was a hybrid of Krav Maga and Northern Shaolin. Both forms had great emphasis on taking down the target as quickly and efficiently as possible, while covering the full spectrum of logicality in unarmed combat. His stance was slightly lower than the Amazon, left side facing her. He had his left arm down and slightly curved, protecting his side. Right arm hand was near his left shoulder, both palms open and slightly relaxed. The posture was defensive, but allowed devastating kicks.

"Begin," Black Canary chimed. She was the match's referee.

John decided to wait for a second and see what the Amazon was going to do, but she remained still in her stance" waiting.

Odd, Amazon culture would emphasise on being the one with the opening move, he pondered.

Deciding not to waste another second, the Spartan quickly formulated a plan of attack. If she was going to strike first, then he will. It was nice being able to fight an opponent his height" on the flipside, _their_ height.

John charged across the mat, using the full extent of his capabilities. The watch may shrink his size, but it sure as hell didn't impede his strength or reaction time. He was still fast and big by anyone's standards" just not insanely titanic.

Upon closing the distance, the Spartan launched himself into the air and drew back his right fist. Reaching striking distance he shot his fist forward and as expected, Diana sidestepped to avoid his attack.

Good.

The moment his left foot touched the mat again, John tucked his chin down and swept low with his right leg. Diana had not expected such a move. One moment the Spartan was within her sights, the next, both her legs were taken out from beneath her.

But she quickly recovered, and put as much distance as she could between her and the Spartan. Diana decided to switch combat

tactics she decided to play dirty. Well what could she say; she'd been hanging around with Hawkgirl and Bruce too much.

She set her stance to low, and prepared for the next onslaught. John barrelled down the ring at high speeds. Even though his size was smaller, he was still damn terrifying. If he and Bruce held one thing in common, it was that their minds and bodies were trained to beyond perfection.

The Spartan was within striking distance once more; he led with a powerful sidekick, pivoted for a devastating back kick, and followed through for two elbow attacks from both arms. Diana dodged and parried but every time she tried to counter, there was always a follow up attack to suppress her. He was certainly a challenge, but a small part of her hated the fact that he could put her on the defensive for so long.

Should have been the one to attack first, she chided herself.

John aimed a series of punches at her upper mass, but Diana raised both arms to block them all. He was fast but she could block automatic fire. His fists slammed against her bare forearms.

"_No bracelets Princess, that's cheating," _Batman had said earlier, _"I'll hold onto them."_"

Unlike Superman who had to regulate his strength and speed 24/7, Diana could tap in and out of her abilities. She was a magical being after all. Her current spar with John however was making it hard for her to match him. When she sparred with Bruce, she would fight him using her "human" capabilities. But John was superhuman; trying to find a balance for her was difficult. Too many times already she was forced to tap into her Meta self to counter him. But if she entered full Meta, she would pummel him.

She felt the force push her back with each landing. The Spartan was unbelievably strong for someone who wasn't classified as a Meta. He could very well pick up a car but she could stop an ICBM.

Diana took the time to look at his bare fists; they were slightly red slightly. It was a testament to his body's resilience.

Deciding to go on the offensive, the Amazon grabbed the Spartan's fists. And before he could react, she had slammed him onto the ground. He retaliated with an upwards kick, which she barely had time to block. The quick pause was all he needed to escape her hold.

The Amazon swept low with her legs, hoping to keep him pinned. But the Spartan rotated and performed a flawless shuriken, landing perfectly on his feet and arms poised. Once again, he went on the offensive. Absolutely no mercy was shown in his onslaught. He was military after all, there was no such thing as holding back. Though surprisingly, he wasn't a grappler. He preferred to use long sweeping strikes.

John was raining down a fury of punches, but Diana managed to block each one. Out of the corner of her eyes, she could see Bruce gesturing something to her. He did a sweeping gesture followed by leaning off. _Sweep and feint away_.

The Amazon warrior used her left arm to parry a right punch; she swept aside his arm and wrapped her fingers around his wrist. She smiled to herself, she had him nowâ€¦ or so she thought. John quickly spun round, pivoting his torso and slammed his left elbow into her temple with such force it left her slightly dazed.

Damn, she swore inwardly. Now he had the advantage â€" again.

The Spartan pivoted clockwise, his elbow crashed into Diana's forehead, knocking her back a few feet. She may have the strength to throw a tank, but that didn't mean she weighed as much as a tank. The moment she lost her balance, she was just as fallible as the next human.

Usually when Batman scored this type of hit on her, he would lay off. She hated that he showed her some quarter, but at the same time she found it _adorable_. John on the other hand was relentless. There was no way he was going to let up until she tapped out or something.

And just when she had least suspected it, the Spartan performed a mid-level side kick, hitting her squarely on her bare midriff. Dana stumbled back but regained her balance once more.

So kicking it isâ€¦ the Amazon Champion thought, she decided to switch to an Amazon martial form similar to capoeira. She let out two high punches, managing to break the assault and force the Spartan back. This allowed her to go on the offensive once more.

Placing her right palm on the mat, Diana spun on the axis of her arm, sweeping out with powerful high kicks and low kicks. If she wasn't so focused on defeating the Spartan, she would've seen Bruce's nod of approval for her tactics.

She managed to force John onto the other end of the sparring ring with her attack, but each time he just dodged or ducked, avoiding contact if possible. He was up to something. And soon enough, she realised what it was.

The Spartan ducked as her legs passed over his head. He quickly swept his leg out low, and swiped across the floor. Diana pushed off the floor just in time as his attack passed under her head and brushing past her pony tail.

She cartwheeled to safety, and realised her 'mistake'. Now it was John's turn to counter. He charged her quickly and unleashed a fury of acrobatic attacks. He summersaulted over her, then feinted left and punched her in the side. Diana blocked, but it left her open to his double round house. The first kick hit her stomach, and the second smashed into her chest.

Diana flipped back, and landed with a resounding thud. But she was not yet beaten and flipped back up in a graceful manner. She looked at the Spartan once more, and found only cold calculative eyes boring into her.

John opened with an attack again, but Diana managed to catch his leg. She swung him around her axis and hurled him across the ring. But instead of landing on his side, the Spartan brushed his hand along the mat, and landed back on his feet.

Diana could hear the murmurs of approval from the crowd. She charged down the ring, narrowly dodging John's left kick, and crash tackled him. She could hear the air escape his lungs as she slammed her shoulder into his stomach.

No sound escaped his mouth as his back slammed into the cushioned barrier. Diana pulled herself away from him, and saw Batman give his trademark half smirk. She shrugged with a grin, and turned her attention back on her opponent.

"Draw!" Black Canary called with a mischievous tone.

Diana just laughed as she helped John to his feet.

"That was good," she gasped, taking a deep breath. She noticed that there was barely any sweat on him; his skin barely glistened, whereas she was practically soaked in perspiration.

The Spartan gave a nod, reminiscent of something that Batman would do.

"Alright, I'm going to go get changed," Diana sighed, grabbing a towel and wrapping it around her neck before leaving for the showers.

John breathed in and out, letting the cool Mediterranean air fill his lungs. It was a good fight, though who had the unfair advantage was debatable. Diana was a magical being â€" much to the Spartan's disbelief. And he was a superhuman with cybernetics.

"That was impressive," Batman said.

The Chief gave a slight nod, and looked at the watch. He could definitely see how this would be useful. Though, he would've preferred using his other build when sparing with Wonder Woman.

"I have something for you," the Dark Knight continued. He handed John a plane ticket, business class to Canada.

"Why Canada?" he asked.

"It's one of the more stable western nations. I want you to go there, and get out a bit."

This took John by surprise. This action was so selfless he couldn't believe it.

"Why are you doing this?" he asked.

"You're not the first," Batman answered cryptically, "and you won't be the last."

****XXxxXX****

"_I miss them. I miss their jokes, their antics. I miss them, John."

>_**-Lieutenant Commander-104**_

"_I miss them to."

>_**-Commander-117**_

XXxxxXX

A/N: Well, what do you think?

Please leave a review to let me know.

6. Never Just One

A/N: Jennifer Hale voices Zatanna in JLU. HOW DID I NOT NOTICE THAT?

She also voices Hawkgirl in **_Injustice: Gods Among Us**_**. There's an idea. CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!

>So to avoid confusion, this first part is in an alternate reality.

XXxxxXX

"_You're training Kal, Krav Maga? That seemsâ€¦"

>_**-Wonder Woman**_

"_I'm willing to take the risk. I've seen him be hit too many times because he holds back. He needs another way."

>_**-Batman**_

**Wonder Woman and Batman discussing Superman's martial prowess, on the Watchtower. (Alpha Earth)**

XXxxxXX

NEW YORK - MANHATTAN, USA, ONE EARTH

John sat at the cafÃ©, waiting for his take out order. His table was on the balcony, allowing him to enjoy the summer breeze and the beautiful skyline. Well it was beautiful, but everything changed when Superman declared himself a God. Now people lived in fear, they lived in absolute terror of the Kryptonian.

The Spartan had sworn an oath to protect humanity, to safeguard Earth and her colonies. Ultimately, he swore to uphold the interests of a democratic government which complied with all basic human rights. A cynic and a pessimist would say that John was foolish, thinking that democratic government existed, or that he as a soldier was a guardian of humanity. They would be right on certain accounts, as he was a Black Ops Project.

But those cynics and pessimists would rethink their opinions after living under Superman's regime. It was a blatant and absolute oppression of humanity. By demanding full obedience and stability, the Kryptonian had stolen man's freedom. He had stolen what defined mankind, well, what defined any sentient an self-actualised life.

"_As horrible as it sounds, I never want to live in a utopia. I never want to see the day when peace becomes permanent. Because when that day comesâ€¦ there's nothing left worth fighting for."_

Those were the words of Arca, an Arcani Asset or ONISAD-SOG Operative that John knew back home. He had helped the Spartan track Soren down. As far as he knew though, Adrian Chen was still alive and fighting the Innies.

There was a certain irony to all this. John's entire purpose was to eradicate or at least quell the Insurrectionism, and now he was an insurrectionist. In a way, Joker had won. He had thrown the world into a twisted anarchy and unsettled a social order.

He sighed as he downed his cup of caramel milkshake. It had been Mila's favourite, and it was the last thing she had drunk before she was killed right before his eyes. John would never forget the day when Mila Evans was taken from him. Clark, no "Kal had killed her when she questioned him.

John could never prove that Superman had killed his fiancée without being marked himself. Since then, the Spartan had gone underground with Bruce Wayne. Funny how the world reacted when they realised that the biggest playboy billionaire, Prince of Gotham was actually the Dark Knight. It was absolute pandemonium, and it was like a double edged sword.

Bruce had intended the Batman to be a symbol, knowing what was under the cowl had destroyed the mysterious shroud behind the enigmatic figure. His fear factor had dropped significantly, but at the same time his ability to inspire hope had skyrocketed. The Dark Knight now stood as a symbol of unhindered and unimpeded free will, a beacon to the average person that they could make a difference.

The Spartan leaned back into his chair, eying the watch that allowed him to hide from the High Councillor and his lackeys. In the sea of New Yorkers, he was just another man dressed in a black suit and tie, bringing home dinner for him and his girlfriend. The glasses, neatly combed hair and light stubble on his jaw allowed him to blend perfectly. As far as One Government was concerned, John was dead and no longer a threat.

Oh how foolish they were indeed. The last person who could possibly give them an edge over him was dead. Miss Martian and her Uncle were both slain by the "Man" of Steel when they had protested against his actions. John's blood always boiled when he thought about his fallen friends, all of them had been killed because of their outcries.

He hated this new world order, hated it with every fibre of his being. What was once used for colourful advertisement was now used to display the oppressive messages and the emblem of One Government.

John turned his gaze skyward and saw Wonder Woman clad in Amazon livery and Champion Armour, flying overhead. He hated that woman; she was the greatest hypocrite in his mind. She sought to change a world she barely understood.

How long has she been here? She should be wiser than anyone!

She was his friend once, but that all changed when she helped Superman kill Fred and his wife, Delilah. Yes, Fred had made it into this universe. He was the sole survivor from the UNSC. No else had

made it, but him. Everyone else had been killed when the Halo Array was fired. Everything had fallen apart since John left. He knew it wasn't his fault that he had ended up here, but there was no point going back now. This place, this cesspit, this poor excuse for a civilisation! Was now his home; and he was going to do everything to restore free will.

"Here you are sir, two t-bone steaks for take-away," a young waitress said. She placed the bag on the table top as John payed for the bill.

"Thanks," he said kindly. ONI had taught him well on how to blend in.

As he stood up, he draped his jacket over his bare forearm and carried the bag in the other. He walked along the boulevard, pretending to admire some of the products on display. No one threw him a second glance, not even the officers from the international law enforcement.

John reached his black SUV, and placed the food in the back seat before getting behind the wheel. He drove across Brooklyn Bridge where he reached a security checkpoint. He hated these checkpoints, they were so time consuming and easily circumvented. They were mainly just there for show. As John pulled up alongside a cinder block, the guards performed a quick sweep of the BMW X5 as he passed them his license and registration.

Upon being cleared, he gunned the engines and felt it hum as he glided down the freeway. Soon enough, the evening sky came as the high-rise gave way to suburbia. He drove along the quieter roads, and finally reached Greenfields Cemetery. He slowed down as he weaved through the narrow drives.

Arriving at a hillside overlooking the entire requiem estate, John pulled over and turned off the engines. He picked up the bouquet of flowers on the passenger seat with utmost care, before stepping out of the car. He felt the soft breeze roll over his bare forearms as he walked to Mila's final resting place.

Kneeling down, he placed the flowers into the slot and gazed down at the photo smiling back at him. Mila had a heart-shaped face and full lips just like Kelly. Evans's chestnut brown hair reached her shoulders, accentuating her warm hazel brown eyes and the barely visible freckles that dotted her cheeks.

John smiled sadly as he brushed the photo. He missed her so much.

First Kelly, now Mila, he thought sadly.

He got back into the X5, and drove out of the cemetery. As he got back onto the highway, his communicator buzzed. Pressing a few keys on the dashboard, the call was rerouted to the car's speakers.

"Wilson," the Spartan greeted the Batman.

"Reynard, one of our teams has been caught. They're being transferred to a prison facility, uploading coordinates now."

"You want me to bust them out?"

"Get in, give us an opening and we'll take care of the rest."

"Got it. Rules of engagement?"

There was a pause. "The usual, try to avoid lethal force."

"And here's another thing, they have teleportation jamming equipment there."

"Does it matter?" John asked, "Any form of teleportation would show up on their sensors."

"Point taken."

The link was cut, allowing John to go back to listening to the news radio. Everything bulletin was such a white lie. Natural disaster here, house fire there, the next upcoming blockbuster movie and sports. Not a single iota about politics or the number of people being whisked away at night.

Perfect world my ass, John hissed to himself.

As he reached a town, he garnered a few looks from the populace with his car, but he didn't care. John parked the car at a motel, signed in at the front desk and paying in advanced for one night. The sun was already dipping over the horizon as rain clouds began to form.

"Room four-two-d," the young woman said with an accent, "it's up the stairs on the north end."

"Thanks," John acknowledged as he collected his keys.

He returned to his car and grabbed his bags before heading up to his room. By the time he got the door open, heavy rain began to fall.

Good, that'll make things easier.

The Spartan placed the 'do not disturb' sign on the handle before locking and barricading the door. He carefully opened his composite alloy suitcase which contained his Infiltrator Gear. It was essentially the GEN5 stripped down to be the lightest and stealthiest configuration as possible. So it was just the black contoured bodysuit and ultra-light armour plates.

He quickly removed his suit, and draped them over an armchair before donning on his gear. Satisfied that everything was in place and synchronised, John pulled the form fitting, vacuum sealed combat hood over his head and slid the visor and optics into place.

Opening the next compartment of the alloy suitcase gained him access to his weapon. The UNSC's Gauss Assault Rifle GAR12A4 and the GP24 SOCOM pistol awaited him. They had been optimised for stealth and rapid reaction, a clear favourite for infiltrators. GAR12A4 or Gary as it was affectionately called by some was a versatile weapon. It was accurate and had two modes of fire, subsonic and hypervelocity,

thus saving user time between switching ammunitions during firefights. The same applied to the GP24 Pistol.

John ran through a quick maintenance check of his weapons before sliding the pistol into his holster, and attaching the rifle onto the back magnetic clamps. He opened the last box in his suitcase, it was no bigger than his palm and would be a form of last resort should he come across Superman or Wonder Woman. The Blackrock was a symbiotic life form that enhanced the host's physical capabilities, granting the ability of flight, super strength, super endurance, energy absorption; projection and manipulation. But that power came at a cost, the Blackrock would overwhelm the host, causing them to lose sight of their former self.

The Spartan performed a quick sweep of the motel with his optics to check if anyone was following him. Satisfied that no one was within the vicinity, he engaged the active camo and disappeared from sight.

â€|

****GUARDIAN FACILITY, **_**Belly of the Beast**_**

When Superman took over, the world's entire premier Intelligence Agencies and the vast majority of Special Forces, all went underground. Since the days of the Metas, Governments had initiated safeguard protocols that would allow them to fight against the oppression of super powered beings. NSA and NORRAD Assets were seized unfortunately, giving the One Government unprecedented surveillance capabilities. CIA, Mossad, MI6, ASIS and ASIO, were officially disbanded, but they retained their structure as they melted into the populace.

Some technical and analytical staffs were recruited into the new regime, while others and their Field Agent counterparts went underground to join the insurgency. Intelligence Operatives new how to handle themselves, they worked tirelessly in the shadows to disrupt One Government, on the surface the Insurgency may seem like an unorganised babble. But in reality, they were just as organised and methodical as the oppressors.

The One Government Armed Forces were military forces and law enforcement all brought under one banner. The mainstay troopers were regulars, whom had committed little atrocities as a whole. The Elite Troopers on the other hand had committed enough atrocities that it made people tremble at their very name.

Guardian Facility was the training ground and Base of Operations for Superman's Elite Troopers. All captured Insurgents with identified history in the military or intelligence, were used as live target practice. The base was situated on the plateau of a very large mesa, most likely artificial. It was naturally defended by the rivers that surrounded it, and had a 200m wide killing field surrounding the walls at the top of the elevation.

There were double walls encasing the facility. A 10m concrete wall with grates ran along the outermost perimeter, patrolled by groups of guards and automated defences. The second wall ran along the inner perimeter, between it and the first wall was the killing field. It was twice as large and had virtually no seams to allow an infiltrator

to scour the surface.

But for John, that wasn't a problem. Using his grav manipulators, he easily cleared the walls without being detected. Around this time, the night was closing in on midnight. The Spartan crept down the open stairway on the second wall, and narrowly avoided a six man patrol.

Although rain diminished visibility, it also increased chances of detection at close proximity. Ducking behind the barracks, John gained his bearings. It would be nice if he had topographical maps, but all government spaceborne assets had either been seized or destroyed. He'd just have to make do with the suit's sensors and penetrating scans.

"Alright," Batman called via the encrypted channels, "our men are held most likely on the northern end. Find the CP, we should be able to hack biometrics and allow you to take out the guards without sounding the alarms."

"And we can locate our pals here too."

"Precisely."

"So what's the deal with reinforcements?"

"I have a team of SEALs and MARSOC ready to create a diversion allowing you to escape. Deltas and Rangers will cut off enemy reinforcements. Once you're out, everyone will disappear."

"Sounds like people are going to be killed, you comfortable with it?"

"This is as much as their fight as it is mine," Wayne answered, "how they want to define it, it is up to them."

"So how will the diversion be created?" John asked.

"When you get into the CP and disable their defences, take note of all weak points, don't upload itâ€|"

"Or it will be traced back to your location," the Spartan interjected. "I'll send you the coordinates via third party."

"Good."

"Reinforcements, do they have the pill?"

"Yes. They should be able to help you hold off the Metas."

"Alright, I'm going in."

"Copy, Batman out."

Five-U93R is a durability enhancer pill that increased bone and tissue tensile strength by several thousand per cent. John had consumed the pill many years ago. It made him more resistant to kinetic attacks, but just as vulnerable to DEWs. Considering his biology and alignment, he was the only person in the Insurgency who

was closest to being capable of taking Superman head on in a fight.

But even then, the odds were quite stacked against him. The Kryptonian no longer held back, he fought unrestrained and aimed to take his opponents down in a single savage strike.

Looking around the base, the Command and Control was located in the centre of the base. The Secondary SATLINK was to the East, and so was the airfield with its fuel dumps.

Under the cover of reign and shadows John weaved his way through the base and easily avoided. He ducked behind crates and hugged the walls of the barracks as he approached a road intersection. Light vehicle patrols drove through the streets.

He took the time to pause behind a small kitchen while a group of trainees ran by, wanting to get out of the rain. The Spartan then panned his eyes across the CP. The building was no bigger than the average warehouse; it was well fortified and had a canteen nearby. There weren't that many people on duty considering that Guardian was a training camp. Only a few regulars patrolled the area here, and they weren't that heavily armed.

John hung 'round the back and climbed onto the rooftop. From there he used his sensors to track the EMP fields. He singled out a wire as the one that carried data on monitored biometrics. Drawing a drill from his Combat Webbing, the Spartan gently and quietly carved a hole into the concrete with superb accuracy.

Careful not to tip any alarms, he placed the bug onto the wire and let it perform its task. Seconds later, his HUD-AR Feed lit with information. The layout of the base was updated to his tactical map, advanced penetrating scans and superimposing software allowed the Spartan to pinpoint his position.

This was a cake walk. He had been trained to infiltrate the most impregnable places by ONI. Despite the technological advancements of this universe, it was still woefully primitive when compared to his. The Spartan hacked into the communications network; he smiled when he discovered that the garrison used radio rather than networked communication. It was a training base after all.

"Biometric scan appears to be a myth," John whispered into his COM.

"What?" Wayne asked surprised. "Are you sure? Luthor said that every personnel part of One Earth has implants to monitor their vitals."

"Kent just made it up to scare him most likely. He would've learnt a lot of things from you."

"Don't remind me. Just get our people out of there."

The link fell silent again as John placed a thermite charge on the base of the communications tower. Climbing down from the rooftop, John checked the map and made his way across the fuel dump. Another team had just been rotated onto their one hour shift, giving him a large window to work in. The Spartan ducked behind the vehicle depot

and stayed out of the rain as he approached the airfield.

All of the flights had been grounded at this hour, save for a few patrols. John easily avoided the sentries as he made a mad dash across the runway. Upon reaching the large vats of fuel, John gently placed an incendiary charge where no one could see it. He made a quick scan with his sensors, and noted that there was a panel nearby broadcasting the tanks' status.

He moved up to the panel and waved his hand over it, quickly overriding the system and hacking the network again. Now the panel would send false readings back to the Command Post. The next place that needed to be hit was the secondary SATLINK, and between it and him were a lot of pipes leading the fuel.

Moving up to a valve, John used his enhanced strength to release it quickly and flooded the pipes with the flammable liquid. No one back at the CP would know anything was amiss until it was far too late. The Spartan made up for lost time as he sprinted through the field of pipes and made his way towards the secondary SATLINK tower.

This one was heavily defended and judging by the guard's movements, the base of the structure was frequently checked. Well there was no way around this one; the guards would need to be taken out. Five stood in a ragged circle around the base of the tower, while two stood closer to his current position, and away from the lights.

Moving into striking distance to eliminate the two sentries, John pounced. In the span of a heartbeat, he ripped the rifle out of the first sentries hand and slammed the butt into the trooper's chin with a resounding thwack. The man fell without a cry as the Spartan spun round and bashed his elbow across the second sentry's temple. Under the tremendous force, the man's helmet cracked as he blacked out and crumbled into the ground.

"I almost felt bad aboutâ€¦" John said to himself, "almost."

Dragging the two guards out of the way, one from the main group walked over to him. Like his comrades, he wore a helmet without a visor.

"Hey guysâ€¦"

The Spartan quickly jumped him from behind. His left arm quickly wrapped around the man's throat, forcing the guard to drop the rifle and feebly grab at the Chief's vice like grip.

"Let's take a walk," he growled.

The guard gasped and nodded feebly, unable to utter a sound. John's HUD outlined the hostiles in red; they were still unaware of his presence.

"Think you're friends are going to shoot you?" John asked in a menacing tone. "We'll find out soon enough."

He walked into the open and moved into the optimal field of fire. In the short amount of time it took for an average person to think a

simple thought, John had already figured out where to move and who to shoot. Strafing across the barricaded area, the SOCOM Pistol hissed as it sent armour piercing rounds down range. Each shot found their mark dead centre in the targets forehead and in less than a second four men lay dead in the rain, their blood diluted by the water.

"Guess we'll never find out," John whispered to his meat shield.

Making his way over to the base of the secondary SATLINK Tower, the Spartan slammed the guard's face into the metal supports.

"Hope your job has dental," he said grimly, "because that's going to leave a mark."

He planted charges onto the structural weak points, and set up a proximity trigger before leaving. According to the duty roster, no one else would go to the secondary tower for at least another 45 minutes.

John quickly left the area and moved along the rooftops of the concrete buildings. Thanks to the heavy rain and night sky, none of the sentries saw him glide silently by. Without incident, he managed to place charges which would cripple self-contained defence turrets, and sever the power grid. There was a subterranean back up power generator; one that John didn't have the luxury of time and resources to knock out. So the next best thing was cutting the wires which were just as effective.

Doubling back past the CP, John headed over to the detention centre. Much to his dismay, it was also underground, and there was only one way in. On the plus side, duty roster for the prison and the rest of the facility were out of synchronisation for security reasons.

He eyed the next replacement team walking towards the elevators, and decided to follow them under active camouflage. This was going to be the most delicate part of the plan; getting in without being caught.

Stepping inside the elevator with the relief team, John quickly checked his digital presence in the base. So far, he had effectively isolated the facility with all cross-COM chatter being kept to a minimal due to the hour.

Having Cortana here would make things easier, he thought.

The elevator's hydraulics vibrated and lowered the platform down into the depths of the prison. Guards milled around, checking the weapons while John spent the nerve wracking minutes crouching on top of crates they were bringing down.

Feeling the elevator coming to a stop, the Spartan prepared himself. Without alerting anyone, he quickly unslung his rifle and gripped the weapon. The doors parted with a click and allowed the people to disembark.

Cutting communications â€" execute!

The AR system quickly mapped out all hostiles in the prison. Living

conditions were horrid, and everyone inside were a part of the Insurgency. But John didn't take the time to care as he quickly cut the communications.

Leaping off the crates, John brought the heel of his boots into a man's skull, crushing the helmet that encased his head. By the time he hit the ground, the Spartan had put a few rounds through his buddies' chest and head.

Frantic cries surged through the cell block as the Spartan remained in cloak and fired from the shadows. His rifle hissed as it hurled rounds into its targets, painting the concrete floor in blood red. John strafed right towards the Command Unit and fired into the box, killing the Operator instantly.

"He's got cloak!" one of the guards cried.

John swung his rifle to bear and squeezed the trigger. The closet guard shook violently as the rounds punched through his armour and shredded his flesh, sending him to the ground. As the fighting intensified, the Spartan went loud. He rose from cover and deactivated camo while shooting at his opponent.

Thunderous claps echoed throughout the hall as the hypervelocity rounds ripped through the air and toppled over guards. The Chief made a beeline towards the Cell Block Controls and upon reaching the room, he opened every cell.

Prisoners rushed into the fray and overwhelmed the numerically inferior guards. Soon, everything went quiet, allowing John to restore power and send out a faux greenlight to the people in the CP. He then turned his attention to the prisoners, most were male and judging by the way they held their newly acquired rifles, they clearly knew how to handle themselves. These were the Insurgents John had been sent to bust out.

"Anybody injured?" he asked.

"No, we're good."

"Then grab their armour and I'll get you home."

Without hesitation, the former Intelligence Operatives and Special Mission Operators policed enemy armour for protection. All of them still had their multi-cam fatigues they wore on the way to the facility. It was their way of flipping off those who loved to wear the greyish blacks and the patch of One-Earth.

Seeing that everyone was ready, John led them back into the elevator. Out of instinct and second nature habits, the small number of prisoners took up defensive positions.

"Batman, we're coming out of the elevators now."

"Good, we're commencing the diversion."

Using the neural lace, John detonated all the preplaced charges. The entire night sky was lit with balls of fire as the fuel dumps went off. Flaming oil and water always mixed nicely to create a lovely inferno. The resulting explosions threw the base into disarray. The

destruction of the communication towers rendered the base silent and uncoordinated, and in the ensuing chaos the Insurgents managed to slip away unnoticed until it was too late.

****XXxxXX****

****ABOARD THE WATCHTOWER, ALPHA EARTH HIGH ORBIT****

Diana walked into the cafeteria and collected two glasses of iced mocha. Regular Leaguers said their hellos and she showed them the same courtesy. Kal's attention was still demanded at a solar system halfway across the galaxy. It was something Diana really couldn't be bothered to understand. She knew that as much as Superman loved his adopted home planet, he still felt the need to help others.

At least he trusts us to take care of Earth, Diana thought optimistically, _then again, it's probably Bruce he's trusting the planet with._

The day had been very taxing. After sparing with John at Elysium, Diana was recalled to the Themysciran Embassy in New York. Apparently there were talk of creating military relations between the Western Powers and the Amazons. It sounded like a great idea, but wellâ€¦ the World of Men preferred to use firearms, whereas the Amazons preferred to fight with swords.

Obviously the "frailties" of one faction had led to differing methods in combat. Bruce had taken Diana to visit areas of political unrest. Unofficially, she met with Field Operatives from some of the world's premier intelligence organisations. For political reasons, the Amazon Princess was not allowed to interfere, much to her dismay. But at least she got to see how warfare was truly conducted these days. It was messy. Inconsistent and went against all Amazon teachings.

She was sure that modern day soldiers would rather pick their enemies off from a distant rather than barrelling down a field of fire with fixed bayonets or swords held high. Trying to smother out the negotiations wasn't easy, as she requested that both administrations rethink their approach to this endeavour.

Now having returned to the Watchtower, she wanted some peace and quiet. Diana walked along the corridors overlooking Earth until she reached a lounge with M'gann sitting inside it. The lounge was beautiful in its simplicity and elegance, and would soothe even the most troubled person. But the overwhelming sadness written on the young Martian's face was something that could not be ignored.

"Is there something wrong, M'gann?" Diana asked as she entered the room. She gently set down the two drinks on the table before easing herself into the velvet couch next to brown haired woman.

"It's justâ€¦" she sighed, "those memories."

"John's?"

M'gann nodded.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"Desperately," she whispered, wiping tears away from her eyes.

Diana silently and quickly locked the lounge room doors and dimmed the lights for privacy. She placed a hand on the young Martian's shoulder and smiled maternally. It never seemed to work for her ward, but it certainly helped M'gann.

"So talk," she said softly.

"I-Iâ€¦" M'gann uttered verklemptly, "I promised John I wouldn't give away anything. In case it might compromise the UNSC."

"Then don't, and show me."

M'gann bit her lips as tears began to stream down her face. "I never had a chance to process all of his memories. And now that I haveâ€¦ I-Iâ€¦ I wish I hadn't."

"You're good word has saved his life," Diana consoled, "take comfort in that. Right now, Batman is finding him a place to live among us."

"I know. I hear he's going to have John work for an Interpol department that works with the League."

"You're going off on tangents; now tell me what is bothering you."

M'gann gazed upon the blue green planet that glistened in the sun.

"Okay, I'll just show you what I can. But please don't tell him."

"Maybe we'll understand why," Diana said, placing both hand sin her lap. She reached over the table and picked up a glass of iced mocha and handed it to M'gann.

"A-are you sure?" the Martian sniffed. "You really like these drinks."

Diana smiled at the joke. "No, that one was for Batman. But he can wait."

M'gann drank the cool liquid greedily, savouring the flavour. Connor and the late Wally had warned her to stay away from the drink, unless she wished to become addicted to the non-alcoholic beverage.

Setting down the half empty glass, M'gann looked into Diana's eyes and reached out for her hand, and showed her the memories.

â€¦

Bruce sat in the Senior Member's lounge, starrng out onto the world passing by. He had spent the past few nights trying to come up with a way to send the Spartan back. But the way how the Supersoldier had arrived, well it was a freak accident. The clear and undeniable truth was that the chances of the Spartan returning home were near zero.

How do you replicate a slipstream space jump? It's all theory here.

Wayne recalled the letter he had placed in the file he had handed to the Spartan. It basically outlined the differences between his world's Interpol and John's. Here, Interpol had the authority to make arrests and could conduct operations independent of local Law Enforcement, albeit rarely.

He had contacts whom were open to a recommendation from the Justice League, and there was a department which worked alongside the organisation of superheroes too. Bruce could easily make a few phone calls and get John a job in that department. He hoped the Spartan would read the letter during his flight, thus giving him ample time to make his decision.

Many would ask why the Dark Knight would be so _generous_ from an inter-dimensional traveller well-versed in the art of symmetric and asymmetric warfare. Those questions weren't without merit. Truthfully, Bruce had done this on M'gann's good word.

"_He's just like you,_ " he remembered her say. She had shown him a small glimpse of the Spartan's memories. And in those short few seconds of grief and despair that he felt, Bruce knew that John did not choose to become what he is now, he clearly accepted it, but he did not have a choice.

That was what drove Bruce to give John a new future here, because the Spartan didn't have a choice. It was clear that he was still loyal to the people that turned him into a weapon, and it was clear why. CADMUS was foolish and arrogant enough to deprive their subjects of basic human needs, and treated them like machines.

Spartans were well trained, and taught to have honour and think outside the box. That type of upbringing made all the difference. But regardless of how the Spartans were treated, Bruce was trouble by the fact that John was taken away from his family. Both of them had been separated from their families at a young age and given a greater purpose.

Bruce picked up Diana's footfalls as she entered the lounge with two glasses of iced mocha fresh from cafeteria. He noticed that one had whipped cream and sprinkles on it.

She only has sprinkles when something is troubling her or when she's really happy, Wayne pondered.

"What's wrong, Princess?" he asked with his deep growl.

"M'gann sheâ€| "

"Showed you those memories," Bruce finished.

"Yes," the Amazon Princess nodded as she set down the drinks and relaxed into the couch. "I understand why you want to help him. But he'sâ€| "

"A killer, an assassin, I know that," Wayne said flatly. "Given the circumstances, I can't say I blame him."

Diana shot him a look of surprise. Despite the Dark Knight's fearsome nature, he never wished to kill. He was abhorrent of the idea of killing, he never handled death well. To see him accept it, it threw her off balance.

"You must look at things from other people's perspective to understand," Bruce justified. "His universe didn't have any Metas. In his universe, humanity was already at war with itself before meeting the Covenant. The UNSC was fighting a war on two fronts. They are representation of humanity's ability to evolve without external interference."

"But man has shown a lust for war," Diana breathed.

"Hasn't your time with us told you anything?" Batman patronised. "Humanity can never be defined as one ideology. There will always be conflict, and it doesn't have to warfare but that's usually what all conflicts escalates into."

"Sorry," Diana apologised, realising she had struck a nerve. Under different circumstances, she would've smirked at her victory for being able to pull one over Bruce. But today just wasn't one of those days when the two could just joke around. The memories M'gann had shown them, had deeply affected them.

"Just make sure he fits in okay."

"I'll make sure of it," Bruce reassured. "It's the least he deserves."

"You're too kind," she said with a smile, hinting that Wayne should drop the playboy and become a public beacon of hope and prosperity.

****XXxxXX****

"_Even when shit hits the fan, there's always something positive that will come out of it."

>_**-Arca**_

"_Such as?"

>_**-Greystone**_

"_Drowning, and not having to worry about the problem."

>_**-Arca**_

"_That's optimistically fatalistic."

>_**-Greystone**_

****XXxxXX****

****A/N:** Well, what do you think? Please leave a review and let me know. I hope that "Second" Chief didn't seem to quirky. I was aiming for dark humour.**

****A/N: Just to clear a few things up.****

****Alpha Earth is where our story began; it is the DC Animated Universe
>One Earth is the Injustice Universe. You might want to look into Injustice Gods Among Us, to understand the premise.**

****We have two Chiefs, one in each. So far we've been following Alpha-Chief.****

****One-Chief has a bit more human characteristics as he's been living with civilians more, but he also harbors one hell of a grudge against Superman and the regime.****

****XXxxXX****

"_Institutionalisation, it happens to all of us. My duty is to protect humanity, but when it is in my hands looking back at meâ€¦ I don't even know what to do. I want a familyâ€¦ it's just I don't know how to get there. In here, I'm a soldier, an assassin. I'm the UNSC's Supersoldier. Out there, I wouldn't even know where to begin."

>_-Commander 117 â€" John Neil Richards**_**

****XXxxXX****

****UNDISCLOSED LOCATION, NORTH AMERICA, ONE-EARTH****

John sat in the sparsely decorated dining room and read the news articles on his tablet PC. He went through the archives and replayed the fall of liberty in his mind over and over again. Had Superman lost his mind when the Spartan just arrived in this universe, then John would've just walked away. He had no stake in this universe. Bruce was that catalyst in making this universe his new home.

The Dark Knight gave the Spartan a new purpose in life, it allowed John to live for real and not fake it like he would have to, like his deployments with ONISAD. Here he finally had what everyone took for granted, he finally had what he and his Spartan brothers and sisters gave their lives to defend. He finally had a future that brought warmth and excitement that only a free man could feel, and Mila was the person to bring him out of his shell.

Mila made life worth living again when everything else was lost. The news had said that she was killed in a car accident. But it was no accident; Superman had pushed a boulder of a cliff causing Mila's car to swerve violently into oncoming traffic.

John entered a depressed state, unable to numb his pain with alcohol or narcotics. The loss of Fred and Delilah had pushed John even further into his pit of despair. It was his friendship with Bruce that pulled him through. Now the two men devoted all of their waking hours to topple Superman's regime. They were determined to end the oppression and avenge their fallen friends.

His fingers swiped across the screen as he flicked to the next article and continued on reading. As he let a small sigh escape his lips, his thoughts drifted back to Mila. His desire to pull the Blackrock out of its case and slam it onto his chest was so extreme.

It offered him a fighting chance against the regime's Metas.

Blackrock, an entity which was as black as coal and smooth as polished marble, it granted the host immense power. A few years before John's arrival, Superman had fallen under mind control from an alien force. Bruce was forced to fight the Kryptonian by using the Blackrock. The Dark Knight was still weaker than Superman, but he made up for it with his greater speed and martial skills. The two had battled for hours on end; the sheer brutality of it matched Superman's battle with Doomsday. But the Blackrock enhanced the host's emotions.

Prior to putting on the Blackrock, Batman only wanted to stop Superman. But when the entity took over the Dark Knight, Bruce's goal turned into a desire to kill the Man of Steel outright. It was only because of Superman's timely release from the mind control that he managed to stop a rampaging Batman and free Bruce from the thralls of the Blackrock. Though that was back in the day when Lois was still alive and _Clark Kent_ was still around.

John wanted to put on the Blackrock so badly, but he knew that if he managed to kill Superman, who would free him from the Blackrock? It should only be used as a last resort, for it amplified rage and anger.

A light knock on the door brought the Spartan out of his thoughts. He turned and looked at a cleanly shaven Bruce Wayne, still wearing his batsuit.

"We've found another universe which might be able to help us," he said with a hint of joy.

John gave a soft smile as he ran his hand through his light beard. He got up from his chair and left the tablet on the table as he walked into the lab.

"Savage, Luthor," the Spartan greeted as he took his seat at the main table.

Bruce sat down next to him, and entered in a few keys into the console.

"This is what we've found, Alpha-Earth. Their time is in sync with oursâ€| and there's another you."

John arched an eyebrow.

"That's not the only thing," Luthor added, "our counterparts there are â€" to put it bluntly â€" evil."

"How, exactly?"

"Alpha-Luthor likes to indulge himself in criminal activities and spend time trying to bring down Supermanâ€|"

"While my counterpart is a megalomaniac hell-bent on world domination," Savage added, "he fits our name more than I do."

"You should've picked a more tasteful name," Luthor said shaking his

head.

"Well back when I chose it, it meant 'to restore with grace' not violent vandal. Besides, I think Victor Sirius is befitting as a cover."

"And maybe a little arrogant," Bruce added.

The men had a good hearted chuckle at that. They knew that even though things looked grim, a joke was needed every now and then to liven up spirits.

John swivelled his chair to look at the inter-dimensional device that stood in the centre of the room. It was how Fred got here. A freak accident of course, but a welcome one nonetheless. He then turned back to face the two men that the rest of the world adored. They were risking a lot aligning themselves with the Insurgency, but they were unhappy with Superman's rule.

Luthor lost a good number of friends when the Kryptonian took over, and Savage had lost his daughter. The four men sitting in the table all had lost something to Superman's insanity. But unlike Bruce or John, Lex and Vandal publicly backed Superman so that they could retain their fortunes and resources to aid the Insurgents.

"So what's the plan then?" the Spartan asked.

"When Alpha you," Bruce said, pointing at John, "puts on his full armour, I'll match energy frequency with the portal and teleport the selected groups of heroes into this universe. From there we can focus on taking down Superman."

John frowned, "that could take weeks, months even."

"We've already waited a few years, we can wait a few more with the element of secrecy on our side," Luthor said.

Certain technology here was far more advanced than the UNSC prior to the discovery of Forerunner Archives. But that was because humanity here was influenced by extra-terrestrial tech. A lot of these would've been invaluable in the war effort against the Covenant. Though the risk they posed to the UNSC in the hands of the Insurrectionists was just as dangerous if not greater. Everything here seemed to be like a double edged sword.

It was why patience was not only a virtue, but a necessity. Each piece of advanced hardware had a time and place to be used.

"In the meantime, we can use the intermission to prepare to cripple the One-Government," Savage said.

With that, Lex and Vandal left the premise to return to their organisations. John got up from his seat and walked over to the inter-dimensional machine. He ran his hand along the contours of the titanium alloy frame and smiled grimly.

"You want to go back, don't you, Neil?" Batman asked, moving to the Spartan's side.

John nodded. "But there's nothing left back there. My home is here,

now. "

****XXxxxXX****

****ABOARD BOEING-747 BRITISH AIRWAYS TO TORONTO, ALPHA EARTH****

The soft shudder of the plane brought John out of his thoughts. It was night, and most of the cabin had fallen asleep. Out of courtesy, he left the ceiling light off, and used his augmented eyes to read what Batman had given him.

â€|

I don't know if Black Canary went over this with you, but the Justice League has a department which liaisons with Interpol. From what I've gathered from Miss Martian, your United Nations Space-Bureau of Investigations, is a descendant of Interpol. But there are differences between your Interpol and ours. Interpol here is permitted to make arrests and partake in operations alongside local law enforcement.

We can relocate you to have a job in this department (it shouldn't be too hard for you all things considered). Don't worry about any questions being asked, I've relocated non-humans before and your case shouldn't be too difficult.

I hope you consider this opportunity, it should give you something to do while we find you a way back home. Contact me when you have decided.

Another thing, there will be a friendly face to meet you at Toronto.

Batman

â€|

It had been well over a month since the Spartan had arrived in this universe, and he could well and truly say that he and Batman were on good terms. The Dark Knight had done a lot to help John acclimatise to this new world. In a way, Batman's generosity scared him.

He looked back at the letter _"there will be a friendly face to meet you"_. John wondered what that meant. He then reflected back on Batman's earlier words. _"You're not the first, and you won't be the last."_

What's that supposed to mean? John wondered. _Maybe someone I know will be there? Possibly. Would explain my treatment._

The rest of the flight, John attempted to familiarise himself with current cultural conventions by watching the inflight entertainment. He needed to distract himself for a while, thinking too much on the same subject would be detrimental.

****XXxxxXX****

****TORONTO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT****

Dressed in olive green cargo pants and a grey t-shirt, the Spartan

was simply another man going about his day to day business. No one gave him a second glance, and why should they?

Passing through security was uneventful, he handed the Officer his US Passport before heading down into the arrival foyer. As he descended the ramp, his eyes panned around the airport looking for possible threats. It was second nature for him to always be on guard. He also made sure that his body language was relaxed as to not rouse any suspicion. John had been with ONI long enough to know how to hide in plain sight.

His blue eyes combed the area back and forth until they stopped, and locked on a Chinese man with the same build and same height. He was wearing similar attire which complimented that light stubble on his jawline, and his neatly combed hair.

I saw you die! John's mind screamed.

The Chinese man walked over to John, and gave a curt nod.

"I was wondering when you'd get here," Li smiled.

****XXxxXX****

"_Have you ever thought about just leaving it all behind, John? Just find someplace to settle down and start a family?"

>_**-Lieutenant Commander Kelly-087**_

****XXxxXX****

****A/N: Gruntpediaâ€| almost died laughing.****

****Anyway, please review.****

End
file.